

record show that this woman deserves recognition for the incredible career she has made for herself, and the way her life has touched others.

TESTIMONY OF ALEXIS DECECCHI  
ON THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF  
THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 20, 2017*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I enter the powerful words of my constituent, Alexis Dececchi, who supports the Affordable Care Act and the protections it provides our most vulnerable citizens.

"Hi, my name is Alexis Dececchi. I want to thank Congresswoman DeLauro for taking the time out of her busy schedule to gather us here so we can tell our stories about the ACA. I would not be standing here today if it weren't for the ACA. I think everyone who has developed a major health problem remembers "that day"—the day everything changed. For me, that day was December 28th, 2012. I refer to this as my second birthday.

During the night of the 28th, my body mounted an inflammatory autoimmune attack against my nervous system, causing me to suffer brain damage. When I awoke, portions of my memory, processing, and visual system had been compromised. Months of fearful confusion followed until the cause was discovered: I had a cellular immunodeficiency affecting my natural killer cells. This caused me to be more susceptible to viral and fungal infections. This susceptibility also caused autoimmune inflammation in my nervous system and brain.

Without the protection of the ACA, I would be defined as having a pre-existing condition, and be subject to expensive, high-risk insurance pools, or potentially be uninsured. Without insurance, I would be unable to afford the experimental antivirals and the bi-weekly infusions of immunoglobulin that I need, which currently cost over \$8000 every month. A reinstatement of lifetime policy caps would also endanger my access to this treatment.

Since receiving my infusions, I have seen improvements in my condition. I have fewer seizures and cognitive issues, and I've regained some of my physical strength. This year, I was finally able to return to the workforce and hold down a part-time job. None of this would be possible for me without the ACA. Though I have improved, there is no cure for my condition, and I will require these treatments indefinitely. Without them, I would start to backslide physically and develop dementia-like symptoms.

The chronic illness and disability community is one of the country's biggest minority groups, but one of the most overlooked. Because of the nature of our disabilities, it has been hard for us to organize, especially if each day is a fight for survival. We should have the equal rights and protections of other minority groups in this country. Right now, our current administration is fighting over policies and ideals, but what we are fighting for is survival. That is a very different type of struggle and one that we cannot afford to lose. The ACA was a step in the right direction for millions of Americans. We can't take a step back. I want to continue to move forward in my life, and I want to do the same for other chronically ill individuals. We need to stand together, and stand

with, our representatives who understand that healthcare is a right, not a privilege."

THE COLUMBIA RIVER IN-LIEU  
AND TREATY FISHING ACCESS  
SITES IMPROVEMENT ACT

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 20, 2017*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reintroducing the Columbia River In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites Improvement Act. For decades now, the federal government has forgone its obligations to the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes, after flooding tribal communities, houses, and traditional hunting and fishing sites with the construction of the Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day dams.

This bill is just part of the work we are pursuing to improve the living conditions at these sites along the Columbia River. This issue deserves significant attention and investment from the federal government. The history of the 31 Columbia River In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites dates back decades. Development that began in the 1930s displaced many members of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Warm Springs, Umatilla, Nez Perce, and Yakama Nation. Those tribes have a treaty-protected right to fish along the river at their usual and accustomed places that needs to be respected.

The tribes were also promised housing to replace what was inundated after the dams became operational and that promise has largely not been kept. I'm working with my colleagues and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and the effected tribes to address these unmet needs through the appropriations process and other legislation.

To address fishing access that was wiped out by the dams, the Corps constructed 31 small sites along the Columbia, designed primarily for daily, in-season fishing access and temporary camping. However, largely due to the lack of promised permanent housing and out of a desire to be closer to the Columbia River, their cultural heritage, and traditional fishing areas, many tribal members live in makeshift housing or shelters at these sites. Because they were not designed for longer-term or permanent use, the conditions at these sites are deeply distressing and unsafe, without proper electricity, sewers, or water. I have seen these conditions firsthand on multiple visits, and they have garnered attention from local and national media. The sites are in dire need of urgent upgrades to electrical, sewer, and other infrastructure, beyond their daily operations and maintenance needs.

This legislation calls for BIA to conduct a much-needed assessment of current conditions at the In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access sites under BIA ownership on both sides of the Columbia, in coordination with the tribes. It authorizes the BIA to improve existing federal structures and infrastructure, improve sanitation and safety conditions, and improve access to electricity, sewer, and water infrastructure. BIA may contract with tribes and tribal organizations to conduct this important work that will lay a critical foundation for the construction of permanent tribal housing.

This is a significant and meaningful step in improving the living conditions at these sites and should be passed by the House and Senate. Our efforts will not stop here. I will continue working with federal partners and tribal nations to see that the need for more permanent housing is fulfilled and tribal member's treaty rights are respected.

TRIBUTE TO THE BROOKLYN  
CHINESE-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 20, 2017*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association (BCA) as they celebrate the twelfth anniversary of their Sixth Avenue Senior Center.

The Sixth Avenue Center is one of nine locations throughout Brooklyn dedicated to the wellbeing and livelihood of seniors and the people who care about them.

After securing funding from The Aging in New York Fund (DFTA) in 2012, the Center now serves over 200 seniors every day. Whether providing hearty meals, medical screenings, or recreational events like birthday parties and field trips, the Center is an invaluable part of the greater community of Sixth Avenue in Brooklyn.

In the face of uncertain times and proposed budget cuts, creating and maintaining a warm and welcoming space for seniors is a testament to the hard work of the BCA staff. Their presence in the community helps some of our most vulnerable neighbors and makes Brooklyn and all of New York a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the staff and all those involved with the Sixth Avenue Senior Center for their dedication to the seniors of Brooklyn. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them on 12 years of service.

TESTIMONY OF DOMENIQUE  
THORNTON ON THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE AFFORDABLE  
CARE ACT

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 20, 2017*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I enter the powerful words of my constituent, Dominique Thornton, who supports the Affordable Care Act and the protections it provides our most vulnerable citizens.

"Thank you Congresswoman DeLauro for giving us this opportunity to tell you how essential the Affordable Care Act is in our lives and what a difference it has made for us not to be denied insurance coverage because of preexisting conditions. First of all I want to remind everyone that the full name of the law is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. One of the most important protections it affords us is the protection not to be denied health insurance coverage due to preexisting conditions. Why would Members of Congress who represent the people of their districts ever seek to repeal patient protections?